	Page 1
ı	IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
2	NORTHERN DISTRICT OF OHIO
3	EASTERN DIVISION
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5	OUTDOOR PRODUCT INNOVATIONS,
	INC.,
7	
3	Plaintiff,
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	vs. Case No. 1:18-CV-02457
o	
l	JEST TEXTILES, INC., et al.,
2	
	Defendants.
3	
4	~~~~~~~~~~~~~
5	
	Deposition of
5	JAMES LEVIS
7	
	June 21, 2019
3	9:49 a.m.
9	Taken at:
)	Singerman, Mills, Desberg & Kauntz Co., L.P.A.
l	3333 Richmond Road, Suite 370
2	Beachwood, Ohio
3	EXHIBI
1	
5	Renee L. Pellegrino, RPR, CLR 1
L	Veritext Legal Solutions

www.veritext.com 888-391-3376

Page 8 Page 6 MR. STAVNICKY: We're here for the A. Nothing to do with Mr. Reaser. 1 1 2 Same with the divorce, nothing to do 2 continued deposition of Outdoor Product O. 3 with Mr. Reaser? 3 Innovations representatives under the 30(b)(6) 4 that we issued. 4 A. Nothing to do with Mr. Reaser. 5 Q. In the instances you were an expert, JAMES LEVIS, of lawful age, called for 6 examination, as provided by the Federal Rules 6 can you recall the names of the folks who hired 7 of Civil Procedure, being by me first duly sworn 7 you? 8 as hereinafter certified, deposed and said as 8 A. The one I was hired by -- the one 9 that was a divorce case, I was hired actually by 9 follows: **EXAMINATION OF JAMES LEVIS** 10 the court to do a valuation of the business. 10 Q. By Lorain Court or where was it? 11 BY MR. STAVNICKY: 11 Q. Can you state your name for the 12 It was Cuyahoga County. 12 13 record, please? 13 Hired by the court? 14 A. James Levis. 14 A. Yes. 15 15 Q. And spell your last name, please. Q. And that was a divorce? 16 A. L-e-v-i-s. 16 Α. That was a divorce case, valuation Q. And what's your home address? 17 17 of a business. 18 A. 131 Barrington Court, Elyria, Ohio 18 Q. What was the next one? 19 44035. 19 A. The next one was in Lorain County 20 Court. It had to do with value of a land 20 Q. Can you repeat the address? 21 A. 131 Barrington Court. 21 contract. Q. Do you remember who your client was 22 O. Elyria? 22 23 A. Elyria. 23 or who the party was? 24 What's the zip? 24 A. Once again, I was hired -- in that Q. 25 44035. 25 case I was hired by the law firm. Page 9 1 Q. Have you had your deposition taken 1 Q. Which law firm? 2 before, this process? 2 Trigilio Stephenson. A. Q. And what was the third instance as 3 A. Yes, I have. 3 4 Q. About how many times? 4 an expert? 5 A. About five. 5 A. The third one was a business dispute 6 Q. What types of cases? 6 between two contractors. A. Three times I was an expert witness; O. Contractors like construction 7 7 8 twice I was, I guess, a witness of fact. 8 contractors? Q. Roughly how long ago were the 9 A. Construction contractors, correct. 10 depositions, like in the last ten years, 20 10 And who hired you in that one? Q. 11 years? 11 The attorney. Α. 12 12 Who was the attorney? A. Probably -- the last one was Ο. 13 probably in the last four years, and the other 13 A. I don't recall his name. 14 ones would have been in the last five to 15. 14 Do you remember where it was? Q. Q. The two times that you were a fact 15 It was in Cuyahoga County. 15 A. 16 or a business witness, not an expert witness, 16 Did any of these five ever involve 17 what were those cases? 17 Mr. Reaser or OPI? 18 A. One was involving a divorce. The 18 A. No. 19 Or American Hood? 19 other was regarding a business dispute. 20 Q. Did it have anything to do with this 20 A. None of them involved any of 21 case or with OPI? 21 Mr. Reaser's entities. 22 A. No. 22 So just stand-alone cases? Q. 23 23 Q. Totally different clients? A. Correct. 24 Totally different. Q. All right. So you've had a decent A. 24 25 Q. Nothing to do with Dan Reaser? 25 amount of experience with a deposition, so I'll

Page 26 Page 28 O. Tax day. Fun for you. Well, no. 1 not? 2 Not quite tax day. 2 A. It was a mutual agreement between MR. CUPPAGE: Close enough. 3 the two of them. 3 Q. What was the sale? Was it an asset Q. I appreciate your answer. What I'm 4 5 sale? Was it a stock sale? 5 saying is, it wasn't as if in the original sale A. It was an asset sale. 6 documents there was like a landmark date that he 7 Q. After the sale did you have any would be bought out by X? 8 affiliation with American Hood? 8 A. No, there was not. 9 9 Q. It was just a mutual deal after the A. No. 10 O. So once the sale is done, your work 10 fact? 11 with American Hood was done? 11 A. Correct. A. I did one project for the accounting 12 Q. Because I've seen it with deals 12 13 firm that purchased American Hood. 13 where there's a purchase of a former business Q. When you say "accounting firm," you 14 and there's like an earn-out and then there's 14 15 mean Weinberg Capital? 15 like a window for that person, they'll be an A. I wean Weinberg Capital's accounting 16 employee for two years and then they go away 16 17 firm. 17 because they need to transition. 18 O. Do you remember who their accounting 18 A. Um-hum. 19 firm was? 19 Q. When did you start working with OPI? 20 A. I'm picturing their logo and I'm not 20 And by OPI, I mean Outdoor Product Innovations. 21 coming up with their name. 21 A. Since its inception. 22 Q. If it pops up in your head at some 22 Q. Which was approximately '15? 23 point, give me a holler. Regional firm, 23 Α. 2015, correct. 24 national? Did OPI and American Hood ever 24 Q. 25 A. Local, over here. 25 simultaneously exist? Page 29 Page 27 1 A. Yes. Q. And I apologize. You said it was an 2 asset sale? 2 For about how long? O. 3 Approximately a year. 3 A. Yes. 4 When it first started, what did you O. Mr. Reaser was a little unsure, Q. 5 because it was complex, I think the exact nature 5 do for OPI? 6 of what it was. Was he still a shareholder or 6 A. Very little. Probably just the tax 7 7 owner post-sale? work for it. Have you ever been a W-2 employee of A. He was a minority shareholder in an 8 Q. 9 entity that they had established. 9 OPI? 10 10 Q. Like they set up a single asset No, I have not. When did your work or 11 holding company or something? 11 A. I'm not quite sure, but he was a 12 responsibilities transition at OPI, like what 12 13 minority shareholder in one of the entities they 13 time frame? 14 had set up. 14 A. Probably in 2017. 15 Q. Do you know the name of the entity? 15 Q. And what did your responsibilities A. I don't recall. 16 become then? 16 17 Q. Is he still a minority owner? 17 A. As the company started to grow and 18 A. No, he's not. 18 develop product, I sat down and started doing Q. Was there an earn-out or buy-out or 19 19 budgeting work with Mr. Reaser, analyzing 20 was it just supposed to end at some point? 20 potential product lines. 21 A. They just bought him out. 21 O. Initially did you have an office at 22 Q. Do you know when that happened? 22 OPI? 23 A. Sometime in 2017. 23 A. No, I did not. Q. Did they have an option to buy him 24 Do you currently? 24 Q.

25

A.

I currently share an office, yes.

25 out? Was it something that was preplanned or

Page 32 Page 30 1 Q. Who do you share it with? 1 ordered were correct. 2 Mrs. Reaser. Α. 2 Q. What's the accounting software that Q. Mrs. Reaser, his wife, or his 3 they use; do you know? 4 daughter? A. They use -- it is QuickBooks for 5 A. Wife. manufacturers. 6 Q. Sorry. The Mrs. Thank you. Q. And has it always been QuickBooks 6 7 What's her first name? for manufacturers since OPI began? 7 8 A. Mila. 8 A. Yes. 9 Q. Say it again. 9 Q. When did you first become aware of A. Mila, M-i-l-a. 10 10 Jest Textiles? 11 Q. And currently how many days a week 11 A. Mr. Reaser called me in the 12 are you at OPI's offices? 12 beginning of May of 2018 and asked me to attend 13 A. Currently it's as needed. So right 13 a meeting with Jest Textiles. 14 now I'm probably there a day, day and a half. 14 Q. Prior to May of 2018 no dealings 15 Q. So at this point in time it's a 15 with them? 16 little bit less than it was at the end of 16 A. No dealings with them. I was 17 American Hood, you spend a little bit more time 17 somewhat familiar with their name because I had 18 with your accounting firm than at OPI? 18 seen their name in purchasing journals up until 19 A. Correct. 19 then, but no contact with them before that. 20 How many partners or owners of your 20 Q. So Mr. Reaser testified the other 21 accounting firm are there? 21 day that there was some smaller projects that 22 A. Two. 22 they had worked on with Jest Textiles I think 23 Q. Just the two named partners? 23 from between 2015 and 2017, like maybe 12, 24 A. Yes. 24 10.000 units. You wouldn't have been involved 25 O. And for the time frame of the end of 25 in that? Page 31 Page 33 1 2017 to the present, what are your 1 A. I had no involvement in that. 2 responsibilities for OPI? Q. And you wouldn't have been involved A. My responsibility is I probably meet 3 in conversations with Kerry Forsdahl or Doug 4 weekly or daily with Cathy Nadolski, their 4 Graves in October, November or December of '17? 5 accounting person. I'm available by phone to A. No, I would not. 6 her. She probably calls me several times a week 6 Q. Have you ever met Kerry? 7 to bounce transactions off of me. Any help 7 A. Yes, I have. 8 Cathy needs with specific accounting issues, I 8 Q. How many times? 9 go over and help her with that. The other part 9 A. Once. 10 is as Mr. Reaser is investigating different 10 Q. At that meeting in May? 11 things and businesses, I do a lot of special 11 Correct. Α. 12 projects for him. 12 Of 2018? 13 Q. Like looking into the products or 13 A. I'm sorry. I've met her three 14 looking into the background of the companies? 14 times, once in the meeting in May, once at the 15 What type of special projects? 15 federal court, and when she was here to give her 16 A. Looking into profitability of sales, 16 deposition. 17 reviewing potential new products that we would 17 Q. But only once out of court 18 develop, the profitability of that, the gross 18 proceedings? 19 margin on those. Things like that. And if 19 A. Correct. 20 there's any issue with the accounting system, 20 Q. Have you ever met Doug? 21 I'll take a look at that. I help them set up 21 No. Α. 22 inventory controls so that we know that we have 22 Or Maryann Vinci? Q. 23 the product in place to deliver timely. I've 23 I've never met Maryann. Α. 24 also helped him sit down and do projections for 24 Have you ever been to China? Q. 25 inventory to make sure the quantities that we 25 I have never been to China.

Page 36 Q. Which answers the question you have 1 paying for what we were receiving. 2 never met with any of the manufacturers or O. Prior to May of 2018, though, you 3 suppliers for Jest that are in China? 3 wouldn't have been involved in issuing purchase 4 orders to Jest? THE WITNESS: Can I have a minute A. No, I would not have. with Mr. Cuppage, please? MR. STAVNICKY: Sure. 6 Q. Or the prior payments to Jest from 7 (Short recess had.) 7 whatever, 2015 to May of 2018? 8 MR. STAVNICKY: Back on the record. 8 A. No, I would not have been involved. 9 A. I met with one of the suppliers. So when you do, for example --10 Q. In the U.S.? 10 looking at Exhibit 35, which lists payments to 11 A. In the U.S. 11 Jest --12 Q. Who was the supplier? 12 Α. 13 A. Nine Bulls. 13 Q. -- you're relying upon information 14 When was that? 14 that you've received from the folks at OPI? Q. 15 A. Two weeks ago. 15 A. No. 16 Q. Was the meeting with regard to 16 Q. What are you relying upon? Information I received from Jest. 17 hunting blinds? 17 A. This is information from Jest on the 18 A. The meeting was just a meeting to 18 Q. 19 get to know them. 19 payments? 20 Q. Was the meeting in the Cleveland 20 A. Correct. 21 area? 21 How do you cross-confirm it with Q. 22 22 OPI? Yes. 23 And who did you meet with? 23 A. Okay. What would happen -- I can Q. 24 A. The owner and his daughter-in-law. 24 walk you through the whole process. 25 25 Do you know their names? Q. Um-hum. Ο. Page 35 Page 37 1 A. No. A. What would happen is Maryann at Jest 2 Can you try to get their names? 2 would send me a copy of the invoice. Generally 3 A. I can tell you -- well, I guess the 3 I would receive the copy of the invoice when the 4 daughter-in-law's name, she goes by Crystal in 4 product went to port in China. Then I would 5 this country, and I do not have a clue on the 5 receive generally an e-mail from her either 6 gentleman's name. 6 later that week or the following week saying Q. So is it a fair statement to say 7 these invoices need to get paid. I would go 8 that the first time you had any -- I'm trying to 8 over to OPI at that point. I would meet with 9 think of the best term -- any significant 9 Mick Maynard, who had a program on his computer 10 dealings with Jest is May of 2018? 10 that would give us the status of all the ships A. Correct. 11 11 and where the order was. After I would confirm O. And that's the first time? Whether 12 12 that the product was due in port timely, then we 13 through OPI or Kerry, that was the first time 13 would -- then I would check off the invoices 14 you really got involved in that process? 14 that those pertained to. Mr. Reaser and I would 15 A. Correct. 15 get together, I would review the status of those Q. What was the purpose of your 16 16 invoices and those shipments with him, and then 17 involvement in May of '18? 17 we would authorize payment to Jest. A. Mr. Reaser contacted me to say they 18 Q. You couldn't authorize payment to 19 were doing this project with Jest, he was 19 Jest? 20 concerned about the amount of money that had 20 A. No. I would make recommendations 21 been paid to Jest and the lack of results that 21 and I would walk -- make the recommendations 22 he felt, and he felt that he needed me to get 22 based on the verbal agreements that we had with 23 involved to help him with the accounting and to 23 Kerry and Jest. 24 actually see what was going on and to put the 24 Q. And I'm using an example, but if

25 Mr. Reaser said "Don't pay that," you can't

25 controls in place to make sure that we were

Page 38 Page 40 1 supersede him? 1 cannot specifically give you my clients' names. 2 A. No, I cannot. 2 Q. Tell me the industries, and then I'm 3 going to try to go around that as best I can. Q. Was there anyone other than 4 Mr. Reaser that had the ultimate authority to A. I have an engineering firm that I do 5 it for and I have a law firm that I do it for. 5 decide to pay or not pay? A. No, there was not. 6 Do they have any affiliation with 6 Q. So I'm going to give you an easy out 7 OPI? 8 here because it streamlines our day here today. 8 They have none. A. 9 You were not involved with the negotiation of 9 Q. Or with Mr. Reaser? 10 the original purchase orders, correct? 10 None whatsoever. Α. Q. With Jest? 11 A. Correct. 11 12 12 Q. Or the terms of shipment? Were you A. None whatsoever. 13 13 involved with the original negotiation of the Or with this lawsuit? 14 terms of shipment? 14 A. None whatsoever. 15 15 A. I was not. Q. As of the beginning of your 16 involvement with Jest on a more significant 16 Q. Were you involved with the original 17 negotiations of the terms of payment? 17 basis -- we're going to use kind of May of 2018 18 as the line of demarcation -- what was your 18 A. Not the original I was not. 19 Q. Were you involved with the initial 19 understanding of the deal between OPI and Jest? 20 A. The day -- and I guess I'm not clear 20 determination of who would pay freight? 21 A. No, I was not. 21 with what you're asking me. Q. Were you involved with the initial 22 Q. What's your understanding of what 22 23 determination and negotiations on who would pay 23 the contractual arrangement was between OPI and 24 taxes or duty? 24 Jest? 25 25 A. No, I was not. MR. CUPPAGE: And you're referring Page 39 Page 41 1 Q. Do you have a title currently at 1 to when he first became involved? 2 OPI? 2 O. After you become involved, yes. 3 3 MR. CUPPAGE: I think that's what Yes. Α. 4 you said. I just want to make sure. 4 Q. What's your title? 5 5 A. Chief financial officer. A. Jest was going to provide blinds to Q. And when did you get that title? 6 OPI. 6 7 A. 1-1-19. That's when it was Q. Did you have an understanding after 8 formalized. 8 May of 2018, as of May or after May, at any 9 Q. But still not an employee? point after May 1st, 2018, who was supposed to 10 A. Still not an employee. 10 pay duty or tariffs? 11 Q. Do you get a payment in addition to A. My understanding was that OPI was to 11 12 the bills for consulting? 12 receive their blinds full cost, full absorption A. No, I do not. 13 13 cost, included all expenses. 14 Q. So there's no separate distinct 14 Q. Where did you get that understanding 15 payment even if it's a 1099 for being the CFO? 15 from? 16 A. All the invoices come through Levis 16 A. My understanding is from 17 Seguin. I do this for two other companies on a 17 conversations that I had with Kerry, 18 limited basis. 18 conversations that I had with Mr. Reaser, 19 Q. Outside CFO? 19 conversations that were going on when I was in 20 A. Yes. On a limited basis as well. 20 the room. 21 O. What are the other companies? 21 Q. Conversations with Kerry? 22 22 MR. CUPPAGE: Are you going to A. Yes. 23 object to that? 23 Is it your testimony that you heard Q. 24 A. I'm going to object to that. I'll 24 Kerry Forsdahl or anybody from Jest say duty is

25 Jest's responsibility or tariffs are Jest's

25 tell you the industries that they're in but I

Page 72 Page 70 A. Yes. 1 A. Yes, that we have four containers 1 2 here that have been paid for. 2 Q. But you never went through it? Was there a wire to C&H at that 3 A. No. This was sent to me by 4 Mr. Reaser as a way of me holding and making 4 time? 5 sure we had all these accumulated together. 5 No, there was not. Q. We can look at number 12. Again, 6 The second paragraph, she says, "The 7 this is another e-mail chain between yourself 7 second issue is the remaining containers that 8 and Maryann Vinci at Jest, correct? 8 are in port or on the way that have not been 9 paid for by OPI." So one portion is containers 9 A. Correct. O. Again, if you look at the top, it's 10 where there's payment, one portion is containers 10 11 talking about payment and it says in the subject there or en route where there's no payment. Is 12 line "Urgent," this time with three exclamation 12 that a fair statement of her assessment? 13 A. Correct. 13 points. 14 Do you see that --14 O. She then references, the third 15 sentence of that second paragraph, "We never 15 Yes. Α. 16 received any cancellations on any of these 16 Q. -- the subject line? 17 A. Yes. 17 orders." 18 Q. And Maryann is informing you -- the 18 Do you see that? 19 last sentence of the top part of the e-mail 19 A. Yes. 20 says, "We cannot move them until all these 20 Q. Do you recall an issue of a dispute 21 between Jest and OPI that orders had been 21 invoices are paid." 22 Do you see that? 22 canceled? 23 23 A. Yes. A. There was in June or July a 24 modification of the purchase orders, in which 24 Q. Take a look at Defendants' Exhibit 25 14. It's another e-mail between Maryann, 25 they were restated, in which she sent Mr. Reaser Page 71 1 an e-mail stating that these are the blinds that 1 yourself, Samantha Hamilton and Kerry Forsdahl, 2 are to be made, and there were -- these are the 2 again requesting payments and tracking the 3 blinds that are to be made, and she asked him to 3 invoices and the amounts that are due? A. Yes. 4 confirm and he confirmed. 5 This is an e-mail between Kerry and And if there's ever a time, other Ο. 6 Dan? 6 than the one you referenced, where I'm showing 7 you a document that you've never seen before or 7 June 18th. 8 8 something like that, please let me know because Q. And it's confirming what? 9 She sent to Mr. Reaser an e-mail 9 we're trying to confirm that these have been 10 saying these are the blinds by number for 10 received by you. A. Yes. 11 Walmart, these are the blinds for others that 11 12 O. Take a look at Exhibit 16. 12 will be produced, sent the e-mail to Mr. Reaser 13 asking him to confirm, and then I believe she 13 A. Yes. 14 sent him a follow-up one asking him to confirm 14 Q. It's an e-mail from Kerry dated 15 again, and he did at that time. 15 October 12th, 2018 to you, subject line "Current 16 situation," which I think is right around the 16 Q. And I'm trying to tie that to 17 cancellation. Are you saying that your belief 17 time of the lawsuit. 18 is that -- or OPI's belief is that that modified 18 Correct me if I'm wrong, and I'm going to be paraphrasing, but she's informing 19 the total number or something? 20 you, on behalf of OPI, that there are containers 20 A. Yes, it did. Q. Flip to the second page of Exhibit 21 in the U.S. that have not been paid for? 21 22 A. I think it's contrary to that. 22 16. The top part is an e-mail from Dan to yourself and Shannon Reaser. 23 Q. Go ahead. 24 Do you see that? 24 A. The very first sentence says --

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25

Yes.

Q. I'm sorry. That have been paid for.

25